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SOLIDARITY



Nº1
Feb '88
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NETWORK

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STANDING
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SUPPORT
CATERPILLAR
FIGHT for JOBS

HACKNEY
PRINTWORKERS
SUPPORT
GROUP

OXFORD
PRINTWORKERS
SUPPORT
GROUP

TERRY FRENC
Betteshanger - 5 years jail
THE
WORLD

bulletin

SOLIDARITY NETWORK BULLETIN

February 4th 1988

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One year subscription:
Individuals £6 (£3 unwaged)
Organisations £10
Send to one of above addresses.

HOW THIS BULLETIN WAS ESTABLISHED

A hundred and fifty delegates and observers active in solidarity with workers in struggle attended the Solidarity Conference held in Leeds on November 7th and 8th. Those present came from strikes, trade unions, support groups and solidarity organisations like the Virag Mendis Campaign. The conference decided to set up a Solidarity Network, establish a steering Committee and begin the publication a bi-monthly Bulletin. As a basis for this the Conference adopted the following main resolution:

"We decided to call this conference because of the defeat of the miners strike, Wapping, Silentnight, Caterpillar, Hangers and Now Traders, and others.

"At the same time leaders of important unions have threatened their members that they will not endorse or support action by their members if it could lead to sequestration, other unions have signed single union deals such as the AEU at For in Dundee.

"As strikers, ex-strikers, and their supporters we feel that it is necessary to fully discuss the lessons of those disputes in order that those lessons can be taken into disputes which will occur in the future. It is necessary to continue organising support for disputed going on at the present time and to continue to support the victimised miners and other victimised workers. We must not allow these strikes to be betrayed. The Labour Party conference and the TUC Congress did not even discuss solidarity with those in dispute

"With the reelection of the Tories there is no doubt that the attacks on the working class are being intensified. New laws against the trade unions are being planned and the present ones are being increasingly used. The employers are already stepping up their attacks on the shop floor, for example at General Motors at Luton, on the Docks, in the pits, in engineering, and with a renewed round of closures and privatisations.

"The attacks on the public sector workers wages, conditions and jobs are continuing as well. The removal of trade union rights at GCHQ, and negotiating rights from the teachers, poses a threat to trade union rights nationally. We must organise support for the teachers and the civil servants who continue in dispute. there are many more disputes going on as well such as Moat House, Liverpool, Senior Colman in Manchester and the miners overtime ban. These disputes must not be allowed to be defeated.

"Most disputes have been defeated because of the lack of support of the official leadership of the movement. To try to change this situation we need to discuss the lessons of these disputes and take them into future actions.

"The purpose of this conference is to try to change the situation of repeated betrayals and defeats of workers in dispute and put us in a better position to organise practical support, both in political and financial terms. The developments in the capitalist system, starting on the stockmarkets, means that such a movement is going to be needed much more in the future."

The following additional resolution on lesbian and gay rights was also adopted by the conference:

"That the Network/Organising Committee circulate information about cases of victimisation, campaigns etc, and urge support from affiliates."

"That the Network should urge affiliates and supporters to take up the issue of lesbian and gay rights and to confront heterosexist prejudices in the workforce and trade union organisation, and to fight for those organisations to affiliate to the Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights, and accordingly to circulate LCLGR to its mailing list."

"That the Network ensure adequate discussions of this issue at future national meetings and avoid marginalising the issue."

REPORT ON THE CONFERENCE

The following report of the Conference was given to the Birmingham Trades Council by their delegate to it:

"One hundred and fifty people attended a trade union solidarity conference in Leeds on November 7th and 8th. It represented an important initiative which brought together strikers, ex-strikers and support groups to explore the lessons of recent disputes and ways in which workers in struggle can link up through a rank-and-file network.

"Having been compelled to end their dispute the Silentnight strikers, in a letter to supporters, cited their total abandonment by their union and the TUC. The opposition to "new realism" provided a powerful dynamic to the conference. Delegates fully understand that reliance on collective strength, democratic rank-and-file committees, and the building of the widest links with other workers and local communities provided the best way of resisting the current defeatism. Consequently it was a positive sign that the conference was supported by many support groups including Tower Hamlets, Oxford and Gateshead and also Kent Women Against Pit Closures, Broadwater Farm Youth Association and a number of Trades Councils as well as the Campaign Group of Labour MPs.

"Mike Grindley, one of the just 26 remaining trade unionists in GCHQ outlined the continuing struggle there. John Lang (sacked printworker) spoke about the manner in which the Tower Hamlets support group had been able to fuse the dispute at wapping with the political issues of the local working class community. He discussed the conduct of that strike and the unwillingness of the union leaders to spread the action to Flett Street. Terry French (Kent NUM), gaoled for his work in the miners strike, cited the lack support for the sacked miners. Delegates backed his call for a conference of sacked miners. Dot Whitfield (WAPC) stressed the enduring role of women in the 1984/85 strike. Roy Butlin (NUR) described the magnificent solidarity action by railworkers at Coalville in refusing to shift coal. A central theme of the discussion at the conference was the need to break the isolation of these disputes.

"Over a dozen workshops were held over the course of the weekend including; strike solidarity, building support groups amongst the unemployed, privatisation, fighting local government cuts, women in the unions and the victimised miners. The conference agreed a 16 person steering committee, including a majority of women, to co-ordinate future work. The debates certainly generated a spirit of optimism and created a determination to build a rank-and-file fight back in the unions and in the workplace."

SALFORD PLASTICS STRIKE

The strike at Salford Plastics has now continued for a full year. We have received the following account from the TGWU branch secretary:

Prior to 1981 Salford Plastics was a part of the Ward and Gladstone group of companies. In 1983 when Ward and Gladstone closed down their cable making division, Salford Plastics was taken over by the managing director Barry R Chapman who agreed to abide by all local and national agreements, this he did for the first year, but there were some redundancies.

The following year there were more redundancies but these were followed by lay-offs. Then a wage claim was refused (by management) because of lack of money - or so Chapman said.

In 1987 another wage claim was refused by the Company on the basis that there was "no money". The research department of the TGWU produced audited accounts for 1984/85 which gave lie to the Chapmans claims and showed £250,000 profit. About half of that went to Chapman for emoluments, directorship fees and pension rights.

When challenged with these figures he ordered the union full-time official off the premises. A mass meeting the following day, February 17th, held a secret ballot and voted for immediate strike action. Chapman also laid off indefinitely six workers alleging laziness and incompetence.

The strikers were sacked when they refused to return to work. The six laid-off workers resigned claiming constructive dismissal. Scabs crossed the official picket line to take the jobs of the strikers. Some drivers also crossed the picket line, but a lot refused. Gradually pressure took effect and in August 1987 the strikers occupied the factory for two days because they feared Chapman was selling the Company assets.

We went to Industrial Tribunal which gave a unanimous decision in favour of the six and awarded £34,500 against the Company. Bailiffs have been in to recover £16,000 of that award.

This week unconfirmed information has reached the strikers that a Birmingham company has bought out Salford Plastics and all the machinery is earmarked for Birmingham.

Jim Billington - Secretary TGWU 6/196 Branch.

LEICESTER SUPPORT GROUP REPORT

Following the end of the Wapping and the Traders disputes, some of those who were involved in the Printworkers Support Group decided to continue as a Workers Support Group. We are a sub-committee of the Leicester Trades Council. In our case this is an advantage in that it gives us more of a base in the trade union movement. This sort of arrangement might not work in other areas.

We have been active in the Renukaben and Baby campaign, which was a successful anti-deportation campaign, involving the use of sanctuary. We have also been involved with the Leicester campaign against the conspiracy laws and support for the N.U.M.S.A strike against B.R.T. in South Africa.

We are currently involved with the North London Advertiser dispute, organising trips from Leicester to the picket line in Finchley, London, circulating their leaflets and raising donations. We are also involved in the campaign to save the Phoenix Arts Centre in Leicester, just begun.

On February 10th we plan had the first showing in Leicester of the Trader dispute video along with a speaker from the dispute.

Our aim is to support all sections of the oppressed in society. We want to give our support to disputes and campaigns locally and elsewhere in a practical way, for example by distributing information picketing and raising money etc. If your dispute or campaign requires support contact us at the Unemployed Workers Centre 138 Charles St Leicester LE1 1HB. Tel (0533) 530005.

DEFEND THE LEICESTER TWO

Throughout the print dispute between News International and the print workers Murdock was able to totally rely on the state, through the police the judiciary and the laws, to defend his attack on the print workers and their supporters.

The print workers had to rely on the support of other trade unionists and supporters. The Leicester Trade Council supported the print workers by setting up the printworkers support group. Two of the most active people within the support group were the Trades Council delegates, Sue Faulkner, a NUPE shop steward, and Ross Galbraith, a TGWU branch secretary.

During the strike they were both accused of "conspiring with person or persons unknown to cause criminal damage to TNT and News Fast Ltd. in Leicester and elsewhere in England and Wales". They both appeared at Leicester Crown Court on 6th of July 1987. Ross was sentenced to six months imprisonment suspended, plus a payment of £600 compensation to TNT and £70 costs. Sue's sentence was a conditional discharge but again £600 compensation and £70 costs.

Donations are urgently needed to cover these penalties - they should be sent to the Trades Council Defense fund c/o 138 Charles St Leicester.

THE MICHAEL DELANEY CAMPAIGN - From the Tower Hamlets Support group

Michael Delaney, aged 19, was killed in Tower Hamlets on January 10th 1987. Michael was the victim of a hit and run incident when a delivery lorry belonging to the T.N.T Company, carrying Rupert Murdock's scabs publications ran him down.

The Tower Hamlets Support Group took up the campaign on behalf of his family to ensure justice. At the subsequent inquest the jury rejected the coroner's recommendations and returned a verdict of unlawful killing. Despite this verdict the Director of Public Prosecutions refused to prosecute. Since that time the driver has appealed against the inquest jury's decision. This appeal will be heard by a coroner and no jury. Once again the state is covering up for those who support it.

A part of the campaign has been to raise funds so that a private prosecution can be taken up. Michael's father regularly attends our meetings and in September the family and friends of Michael led a demonstration to the scab printing plant at Wapping. On January 10th 1988 a small family gathering took place at the scene of the incident.

Although the labour movement has responded locally to our request for funds more money is required to assist with the private prosecution. Michael and his family and friends are just some of the many victims of the

Murdock Empire. Please raise funds for us if you can.

All cheques should be made to the Tower Hamlets Support Group/ Justice for the Delanys' and sent to 74 Kingsland Rd, Plaistow, London E13.

SENIOR COLEMAN STRIKE - By Tony Lowe

A rally held in Manchester on January 16th commemorated the anniversary of the strike. Over 400 people heard speeches from, amongst others, Denis Skinner, Betty Heathfield and Dennis Pinnington - the only remaining victimised miner in the Lancashire coalfield.

Behind the scenes the parent company (Senior Engineering) board members have written to John Tocher, the AEU Divisional Organiser, saying that they are prepared to have a meeting. The conditions laid down in the letter made it practically impossible for union to meet, although management have since again indicated they are prepared to have a meeting.

Meanwhile picketing of the factory continues 24 hours a day and seven days a week. Visits are continuously being arranged in various parts of the country and money is still coming in from supporters, although our strike pay has now been stopped by the AEU under the 12 months ruling!

The period before Christmas and the new year were apprehensive times for the strikers and their families. They need not have worried, however. We had visits from Durham and Notts miners with food and money and presents for the children. We also had tremendous support from local factories and other organisations. In the end it was a Christmas we will never forget.

The mood of the picket line remains optimistic, but at the same time there is frustration with the lack of AEU to support the strike in a more progressive way

THE VICTIMISED MINERS - Terry French

I became involved in the "Solidarity Network" when I attended the original conference in Leeds during the autumn of last year. On the journey north from Kent I remember thinking that it would either turn out to be a sectarian type of affair or it would be hijacked by a political group for their own ends.

Well the reason I am writing this now is because neither turned out to be the case. There are people nationally involved from most of the different support groups striving to ensure that the workers in struggle will have the support they deserve - irrespective of whether their union pulls the financial rug from under them as we have seen so many times in the past. I refer to such struggles as Silentnight, Hangers and Wapping, all disputes where the withdrawal of union finance led the workers to being defeated.

In the case of the victimised miners, they have only once tried to take the initiative and fight for their jobs. On May 1st 1987 I led a group of these men and we successfully called on our comrades in South Yorkshire for a 24 hour stoppage in our support. It resulted in over 1,200 miners walking out at a cost to the NCB of £2,000,000. The response of certain NUM area leaderships to this, the first unified area strike by miners since the return to work in 1975, was to threaten those sacked miners who took part with further financial hardship. This is just one example where workers are beaten down by the use of financial restraints from the bureaucracy of the union.

I am sick and tired of workers in struggle being used and then cast aside either for political or financial reasons, and it is for this reason that I want to see national support developed. I want to see the Solidarity Network grow into an organisation which can fight for workers in struggle. An organisation not tied to any one political party group or union.

I have often said that the support group network which operated during the miners strike (over 450 groups) could have been a real alternative to the TUC. Pie in the sky? I don't think so. My reason for saying this is the importance that such parties as the CP, both in Britain and in Europe, saw in them. When the miners strike finished the CP moved as rapidly as possible to disband as many of the groups as they possibly could. The reason why is simple, they saw them as a threat, a new phenomenon in the struggle of ordinary workers.

It is imperative in Britain today, when most trade unions are running for financial cover, that this organisation succeeds and becomes the defender of the ordinary workers when they feel they need to fight for their rights - whether they are 10 or 10,000. I urge you to support the national Solidarity Network and give hope to workers where there is none.

NORTH LONDON ADVERTISER DISPUTE

Journalists at the North London Advertiser, in Finchley, have been on strike since November 12th 1987. The following is the statement of the NUJ Chapel giving details of the situation:

The Advertiser NUJ Chapel's 14 members have been out on official strike since November 12 1987 after the disputes procedure on the victimisation of six of its members had been exhausted. A secret ballot of the members resulted in a unanimous vote for strike action. On Monday, November 23rd, the eight members who supported their six victimised colleagues were themselves sacked for taking legitimate trade union action.

The seven Advertiser titles have since then continued publication, the editorial being produced by the editor, the chief sub, two photographers and a promotions director. They are type-set by non-union setters in Finchley and printed by BPCC at Killick Street, Kings Cross. They are then distributed by non-union people, mainly elderly or children.

A number of syndicated columns have been withdrawn by their NUJ suppliers and local left councils (Brent, Haringey and Camden) have withdrawn their advertising for other reasons, namely that they find the sloppy admin and printing of the Advertiser as unacceptable.

However, we have been unable so far to stop the column by Jimmy Greaves (an NUJ member) Russell Grant's stars (He's NUJ too) and a gardening column by Cyril Fletcher (one-time comedian and non-NUJ). Any assistance in stopping these would be welcome.

We have maintained a regular day-time picket outside our main premises in Finchley, and hold occasional ones at our Enfield offices. We also have regular Tuesday large demonstrations which are attended by up to 80 supporters. Local MPs, Bernie Grant and Ken Livingstone have also attended and spoken at these...

We have launched an active fund-raising campaign by attending meetings, organising regular collections and holding strike benefits...

Our reliable intelligence network inside the building tells us that our strike is creating a large number of problems there. Apart from the long

hours the scab editorial staff are having to put in, the story of the brutal way that management behaved towards us is spreading, and awkward questions are being asked of sales staff and management. We are still convinced that the strike is winnable, but we need the support to do it.

THE LIVERPOOL ECHO DISPUTE

In December the Liverpool Echo sacked 11 NGA production workers for "holding an unauthorised meeting". The papers Old Street offices are being picketed and the strikers are asking for the Echo and the Daily post to be boycotted.

LIVERPOOL - ISLE OF MANN FERRY DISPUTE

The Isle of Mann ferry had been occupied for over 4 weeks over the I.O.M Steam Packet Companies move to impose more sailings at peak times with less holidays. As this Bulletin is being printed a national strike of all NUS members on the ferries has been called in spite of a High Court Injunction. More on this in the next edition.

OXFORD SUPPORT GROUP REPORT

We still meet every Tuesday to organise support for disputes. Every two weeks we are sending a delegation to the North London Advertiser picket line. We are planning to have a delegation of Senior Colman strikers for a weeks campaigning in Oxford shortly. We have also recently sent a delegation to the TV-AM picket line in Camden. We were also central to the organisation of a 500 strong demonstration in Oxford against cuts in the NHS on January 23rd and are a part of the continuing campaign to defend the Health Service.

LONDON COUNCIL WORKERS STRIKE ON MARCH 8th

The London Authorities Joint Trade Union Committee (London Bridge) is calling on unions in the London boroughs to take strike action and to demonstrate on March 8th. The action is being called to protest at the cuts and the privatisation of Council jobs and services.

These attacks have already resulted in one day strikes organised mainly by NALGO with the support of local teaching and craft unions in a dozen boroughs and obtained up to 80% support. A London-wide strike and demonstration is the next step that is necessary.

The call, organisation, and leadership of this action is in the hands of the local union leaderships and the rank and file. The strongest response has been from NALGO and the urgent need is the involvement of other unions particularly the NUT, UCATT and the craft unions.

Although the strike is essentially about the defense of jobs and services in London Councils it will have a national significance, and it is hoped that there will be delegations from other areas where there is opposition

to cuts.

The demonstration will assemble in Camden and march to Westminster. The main speakers invited are Arthur Scargill, Eric Heffer and John Macready. For more information contact Ed Hall 9-15, New Park Rd, London SW2 4DU.

LOOKING BACK AT THE WAPPING STRIKE -

Larry Hyett

Support groups, and support units, are a weapon developed from workers in struggle, in defence of their class interests, not in defence of one union or one industry.

The matter of who leads was of great importance during the print workers struggle. The formation of support groups, which developed in the same way as with the miners in 1984/5, was due to the failure of the leaders of the labour movement to defend its class. For example union leaders condemned "outsiders" (as they called them) for coming on our picket lines. In doing so they were siding with the media and the police. They were capitulating to state violence and unjust anti-union legislation.

The lessons of solidarity developed during the miners strike showed that no strike is going to be won through bucket collecting alone - but through solidarity and industrial strength.

Support groups activists were able to debate with the strikers and collectively organise beyond meetings controlled by the full-timers and those appointed to control the strike for the leadership. They were able to argue against defeatist campaigns as "don't buy" boycotts - the lowest form of solidarity.

During the last election some figures were used by the national print unions to support the Labour Party, saying that 20,000 jobs were lost during our strike. Baring in mind that 5,500 printworkers were in dispute at News International, that means that 15,000 jobs were lost without one nights loss of production in Fleet Street. There was not one call for solidarity action in defence of those on strike. The call for "Fleet Street out" was taken up by only a small number of militants took up the call for "Fleet Street out" leading to a national print strike.

Today the job losses continue to mount up in the print industry. The victimisation of FOCs and MOCs and elected representatives of print workers all go unchallenged. A group called the Fleet Street Support Unit demanded action in defence of the workers in the industry, particularly at West Ferry Road Printers, now the home of the Telegraph, Sunday Telegraph, Observer and the proposed site of the Express Sunday Express and the Star. No heed was taken on this and management took control on new years night and staffed the presses and printed without the traditional staff.

THE DEFENCE OF THE HEALTH SERVICE

On Wednesday February 3rd thousands of NHS worker right across the country put up picket lines both in defence of the Health service and in defence of their own wages and conditions. These strikes came as this bulletin was going to print, we will have to carry much more on this in our next edition.

CONTACT DETAILES FOR DISPUTES NOT COVERED ABOVE

OGDENS dispute, Liverpool, contact - Frank Dooley, TGWU, Transport House, Islington, Liverpool.

SALFORD PLASTICS, contact - Jim Billington, Transport House, 1 Cresent, Salford, Manchester, M5 4PR.

WORKSHOP REPORT-BACKS FROM THE CONFERENCE

A request was made at the Leeds conference for the workshop report-backs to written up for publication in this Bulletin. These are the first two we have received. Others will be included in furture editions as they come in.

WORKSHOP - LINKING UP SUPPORT GROUPS Garry Pye

The workshop considered that the following measures were necessary:
1) It is necessary to establish a directory of all our contacts. This should perhaps be catigorised; e.g. into support groups, workers in disputes and contacts and individuals so that costs can be saved on mailings.

In creating the directory it may be worth our while contacting all our contacts to find out if there is still any support activity happening in their area or if it had faded out.

Computerisation of the directory would both hasten and improve the functioning of the directory, particularly for specialised mailings. The updating of directory should be carried out every three to six months. Also the directory could probably be regionalised, which would provide an instant contacts list for any regional campaign - for example in opposing cuts in a Regional Health Authority.

2) The need to disseminate the information: Points were made about the need for information about the history of disputes and the political ideology of workers in dispute. Doubts were raised about the problems of carrying leagal information in the Bulletin.

3) Further points raised: The groups in the same region should be put in touth with each other. They could get together to support local disputes and assist with organisation, fund raising etc.

The network should not consenstrate specifically on workers in dispute but it is essential to link up with campaigns such as the health and the education cuts. It is also important to link up with international campaigns.

WORKSHOP - TRADE UNION LEADERSHIP

The workshop on how to deal with the leadership was lively and enriched by a variety of differing views on how to tackle the problem. Worth mentioning was that contributions were based on actual experiences from days of struggle and because of that a very friendly spirit prevailed throughout

the debate. But sorry, no one proposed putting the lot of them against the wall, unfortunately.

Two main views were expressed: one giving some importance to working within the existing trade union structures and the other dismissing the latter, proposing instead the search for completely new forms of organisation.

Within this broad context, everyone agreed that getting someone "good" elected was not enough because at the end of the day it was the apathy of the membership that allowed leaders to "make themselves at home" in their plush jobs.

A miner from Warwickshire told the story of how at the beginning of their strike the rank and file took control by voting that their branch EC would deal with administration and that an elected strike committee would from then on lead in the dispute and be accountable to the miners and their wives at open meetings.

At the end of the workshop the contributions dealt with the importance of placing industrial disputes where they belong - at the centre of the class struggle.

MINUTES OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE SOLIDARITY NETWORK — Held in Leicester on 12.12.87

1) Reports on Disputes

North London Advertiser: A representative of the North London Advertiser strikers attended the meeting and gave a report. He urged the Solidarity Network to organise support for the strike in particular organising delegations to the Weekly mass pickets held at 8.00 a.m. every Tuesday.

Moat House strike, Liverpool: A discussion was held on the organisation of support for the Moat house strike (but it has now ended).

Victimised miners: A request was received for money to help the victimised miners to travel around the country campaigning. It was agreed that an appeal would be made for this.

Information

Leaflets were received from Salford Plastics, Manchester, who have been on strike since February 1987. Leaflets were also received from strikers at Ogdens, Liverpool, who have been on strike for over six months. Information was received from Caterpillars regarding a video of the occupation. Leaflets were also received from the NUMSA (South Africa) campaign against BTR.

2) Organisation of the Bulletin: It was agreed the first edition would be duplicated, whilst other methods of production would be investigated. It was agreed that an editorial sub-committee of one or more from Leicester, London and Oxford. they would meet alternately in those places. The first meeting would be in Oxford on January 3rd.

Reports for the Bulletin: Some reports were already in but more were needed, as were reports of the workshop from the conference.

3) Finance of the Bulletin: It was stressed that subscriptions to the Bulletin were urgently needed - £6 for individuals and £10 for groups. Cheques payable to the Support Network.

4) Speakers: It was agreed that we should try and get speakers at meetings and conference which are coming up, in particular the Regional Chesterfields and the BLOC conference.

5) Chesterfield Socialist Conference: It was agreed that the Solidarity network approach the Chesterfield Organising Committee with a view to linking our solidarity work with that of the Chesterfield campaign.

6) Central list of support groups: John Lang volunteered to do some work on this.

7) Next meeting: The next meeting is an open meeting. It will be held on Saturday February 27th at the Merseyside Trade Union Unemployed Resource Centre, 24 Hardman Street, Liverpool. (Off Hope Street).

A COMPREHENSIVE CONTACT LIST

For the Solidarity Network to be successful a comprehensive contact list will need to be drawn up. This should contain any group, organisation or individual who could be of assistance to a dispute or campaign. During many of the past national or local disputes and campaigns support groups have formed their backbone. Unfortunately as soon as the events were over the groups tended to fold up as well. One of the aims of the Network will be to re-activate these groups and to link them with others.

As well as support groups it is hoped that the list will eventually contain Trades Councils, Student Unions, Unemployed Centres, political organisations and individuals. As well as affiliating to the Network it would be useful if names and addresses could be supplied to help to build up this list. Contacts for your area should be phoned to John on 01-471-7860.

NEXT OPEN MEETING OF THE SOLIDARITY NETWORK

12.00 - 4.00 p.m at the Merseyside Trade Union Unemployed Resource Centre, 24 Hardman Street, Liverpool (off Hope Street).

Those in dispute are especially welcome to discuss with us how we can best give support; plus all who want to help with this work.

NATIONAL UNION OF MINeworkERS

VICTIMISED MEMBERS

(To the NUM Special Conference 2 2.88)

Three years on and our Union still has 300 unemployed members, victims of the year long strike are still being persecuted by the state and Coal Bosses.

Three hundred, once proud working miners now reduced to living on handouts, taking themselves and their families from a proud class in society, to a level that they had never dreamt of.

Our victimised members realise now, more than ever, that their only real allies in life is the National Union of Mineworkers, and the progressive sections of the Labour Movement.

Victimised miners are still being segregated from working miners by the Coal Board.

PENSIONS

Victimised miners have lost up to 4 years pension credits, an average of £8 per week on their pension. Rule changes were made for working members to buy back credits for lost contributions between 1984/85. No such arrangements were allowed for our victimised lads.

UNION RECOGNITION

All local Branch officials and committee members dismissed during and after the strike are not being recognised by the Board. At one pit, Batteshanger, where there are still 30 victimised members, all three officials are not being recognised.

In reality it is now the Board who choose union representatives not the members.

WELFARE

The Coal Board have not been satisfied with just supporting changes in the Coal Act regarding union representation on Welfare committees. C.I.S.W.O. have now changed its' rules to the effect that any victimised member being nominated by his Branch to a regional committee will be automatically disqualified from such committees. I wonder how the U.D.M. voted?

We are disappointed that the issue of Victimisation has not been agendered at this special conference.

We therefore appeal to delegates to support our claims for:-

1. A victimised member to have a non voting seat on the N.E.C.
2. A Special Delegate Conference to formulate National Policy on Victimised members.

KENT VICTIMISED MINERS

A Statement from London Councillors Against the Cuts

Labour fought the 1986 Council Elections across London campaigning to improve services and to fight cuts in the living standards of working class people. Only democratically accountable public services can hope to deal with the growing level of poverty and inequality in London.

During Thatcher's third term, the screw is being tightened more and more. Resources exist to meet all the needs of Londoners - millions in Rate Support Grant has been stolen from London Councils since 1979. But instead of providing desperately needed cash, the Tories are preparing to smash public provision of basic services and put them in the hands of private profiteers; the ultimate aim being the total destruction of local services and local democracy.

What has been the response of Labour Councils to these attacks? Labour Councils have embarked upon an uncontrollable process of cuts with all previously agreed policies and principles being ditched. Labour councillors are justifying their actions by claiming they must stay in power at all costs. It is clear that they are not in power, they are merely in office. There is no bottom line and no guarantee of when the cuts will stop.

There is no difference between a Tory and a Labour cut. Thousands of jobs are being lost through voluntary and compulsory redundancies. This strategy spells certain defeat for the Labour Movement and the working class in London. Cuts simply prepare the ground for the proposed Tory legislation. Unless we develop a political strategy of resistance there will be nothing left to defend at the next Council elections in 1990.

We can fight

Labour Councils and the whole labour Movement must go on the offensive to demand the money to meet the needs of our communities. The Government has the money - we intend to force this out of them by:

- joining with workers, trade unionists, tenants, voluntary groups and all oppressed people in the community to fight against the cuts, and for services which meet their needs.
- fighting for budgets based on the need of the community in each Borough

This strategy is clearly one of political confrontation but we have no choice if we are to defend jobs and services, and to keep alive the fight against Thatcher and for socialism.

Rather than launching attacks on those prepared to fight, Council leaders should resign if they are not prepared to stand by their Manifestos. There are now over one hundred Labour Councillors in London fighting against the cuts and standing by the promises on which they were elected. We call on the Labour Party in London and all Labour councillors to fight the government not give in to it, and pledge that we will work with all those prepared to fight against cuts in jobs and services whoever makes them.

This statement is produced by
London Councillors Against Cuts

bringing together over 100 councillors from
Barnet Brent Camden Ealing Greenwich Hackney Hammersmith & Fulham Haringey
Hillingdon Lambeth Lewisham Newham Southwark Tower Hamlets Wandsworth and ILRA.

Contact Greg Tucker, (secretary) c/o Members Room, Lambeth Town Hall, SW2. 01 582 2955